

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:
displaying a supplemental graphical element over at least one symbol element in one or more displayed reels of a casino gaming machine, wherein the at least one symbol element remains at least partially visible while the supplemental graphical element is displayed.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
displaying the at least one symbol element;
determining, based on the at least one symbol element, whether a triggering event has occurred; and
if a triggering event has occurred, identifying the supplemental graphical element as a set of video images.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein displaying the supplemental graphical element comprises displaying the supplemental graphical element in a manner that creates an appearance of full motion video.

4. A method comprising:
displaying at least a portion of a reel symbol element during a play iteration of a casino game; and
in conjunction with the display of the reel symbol element, and before the play iteration is completed, displaying a supplemental graphical element so that it appears as an overlay over the reel symbol element, wherein the reel symbol element appears to be at least partially visible during at least a portion of a time period that the supplemental graphical element is displayed.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
 - determining, based on the at least one symbol elements, whether a triggering event has occurred; and
 - if a triggering event has occurred, identifying the supplemental graphical element as a set of video images.
6. The method of claim 4, wherein displaying the supplemental graphical element comprises displaying the supplemental graphical element in a manner that creates an appearance of full motion video overlayed over the reel symbol element.
7. An apparatus comprising:
 - one or more processors, which
 - cause multiple game element images to be displayed within multiple game element areas of a display device,
 - determine based on the multiple game element images, whether a triggering event has occurred,
 - if a triggering event has occurred, identify a set of video images, and
 - cause the set of video images to be displayed on the display device in conjunction with the multiple game element images, so that the set of video images appears as an overlay over one or more of the multiple game element images.
8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the one or more processors causes the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that creates an appearance of full motion video.
9. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the one or more processors causes the set of video images to be displayed by causing at least a portion of a video image within the set to be displayed within a first set of pixels within a game element area, such that a game element image associated with the game element area is at least partially visible.

10. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the one or more processors causes the set of video images to be displayed by causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that the set of video images appears as an opaque overlay over one or more of the multiple game element images.
11. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the one or more processors causes the set of video images to be displayed by causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that the set of video images appears as semi-transparent overlay over one or more of the multiple game element images.
12. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the one or more processors further:
 - determines whether a video image is associated with an alteration of a game element image within a game element area; and
 - if the video image is associated with the alteration, causes an altered image to be displayed in the game element area.
13. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the apparatus forms a portion of a wagering game machine, and the apparatus further comprises:
 - a display device, operatively coupled to the one or more processors.
14. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the apparatus forms a portion of a portable, battery powered video game system, and the apparatus further comprises:
 - a display device, operatively coupled to the one or more processors.
15. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the apparatus forms a portion of a personal computer, and the apparatus further comprises:
 - a display device, operatively coupled to the one or more processors.
16. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the apparatus forms a portion of a video game system that interacts with a television set, and causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises causing the set of video images to be displayed on the television set.

17. An electronic slot machine comprising:
 - one or more processors, which
 - cause multiple symbol images to be displayed, by one or more display devices, within multiple symbol areas associated with multiple reels,
 - determine based on the multiple symbol images, whether a triggering event has occurred,
 - if a triggering event has occurred, identify a set of video images, and cause the set of video images to be displayed in conjunction with the multiple symbol images, so that the set of video images appears as an overlay over one or more of the multiple symbol images; and
 - one or more display devices, operatively coupled to the one or more processors, which display the multiple symbol images and the set of video images.
18. The electronic slot machine of claim 17, wherein the one or more processors causes the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that creates an appearance of full motion video.
19. The electronic slot machine of claim 17, wherein the one or more processors cause the set of video images to be displayed by causing at least a portion of a video image within the set to be displayed within a first set of pixels within a symbol area, such that a symbol image associated with the symbol area is at least partially visible.
20. The electronic slot machine of claim 17, wherein the one or more processors cause the set of video images to be displayed by causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that the set of video images appears as an opaque overlay over one or more of the multiple symbol images.
21. The electronic slot machine of claim 17, wherein the one or more processors cause the set of video images to be displayed by causing the set of video images to be

displayed in a manner that the set of video images appears as semi-transparent overlay over one or more of the multiple symbol images.

22. The electronic slot machine of claim 17, wherein the one or more processors further:

determine whether a video image is associated with an alteration of a symbol image within a symbol area; and

if the video image is associated with the alteration, cause an altered image to be displayed in the symbol area.

23. The electronic slot machine of claim 17, further comprising:

a money/credit input/output (I/O) device for enabling a player to obtain credits; and

player input devices that enable the player to specify a bet and to initiate a spin of the multiple reels.

24. A method for displaying images in an electronic game, the method comprising:

causing multiple game element images to be displayed within multiple game element areas;

determining based on the multiple game element images, whether a triggering event has occurred;

if a triggering event has occurred, identifying a set of video images; and

causing the set of video images to be displayed in conjunction with the multiple game element images, so that the set of video images appears as an overlay over one or more of the multiple game element images.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that creates an appearance of full motion video.

26. The method of claim 26, wherein causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises:

causing at least a portion of a video image within the set to be displayed within a first set of pixels within a game element area, such that a game element image associated with the game element area is at least partially visible.

27. The method of claim 24, wherein causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises:

causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that the set of video images appears as an opaque overlay over one or more of the multiple game element images.

28. The method of claim 24, wherein causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises:

causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that the set of video images appears as semi-transparent overlay over one or more of the multiple game element images.

29. The method of claim 24, further comprising:

determining whether a video image is associated with an alteration of a game element image within a game element area; and

if the video image is associated with the alteration, causing an altered image to be displayed in the game element area.

30. The method of claim 24, wherein the electronic game is a game designed for execution on a wagering game machine, and causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises causing the set of video images to be displayed on a display device coupled to the wagering game machine.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the electronic game is an electronic slot machine game, and the multiple game elements include multiple symbol areas, and the

multiple game element images includes multiple symbols displayed within the multiple symbol areas.

32. A method for displaying images in an electronic slot machine game, the method comprising:

causing multiple symbol images to be displayed within multiple symbol areas associated with multiple reels;

determining based on the multiple symbol images, whether a triggering event has occurred;

if a triggering event has occurred, identifying a set of video images; and

causing the set of video images to be displayed in conjunction with the multiple symbol images, so that the set of video images appears as an overlay over one or more of the multiple symbol images.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that creates an appearance of full motion video.

34. The method of claim 32, wherein causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises:

causing at least a portion of a video image within the set to be displayed within a first set of pixels within a symbol area, such that a symbol image associated with the symbol area is at least partially visible.

35. The method of claim 32, wherein causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises:

causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that the set of video images appears as an opaque overlay over one or more of the multiple symbol images.

36. The method of claim 32, wherein causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises:

causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that the set of video images appears as semi-transparent overlay over one or more of the multiple symbol images.

37. The method of claim 32, further comprising:

determining whether a video image is associated with an alteration of a symbol image within a symbol area; and

if the video image is associated with the alteration, causing an altered image to be displayed in the symbol area.

38. A computer-readable medium having program instructions stored thereon to perform a method, which when executed within an apparatus, result in:

causing multiple game element images to be displayed within multiple game element areas;

determining based on the multiple game element images, whether a triggering event has occurred;

if a triggering event has occurred, identifying a set of video images; and

causing the set of video images to be displayed in conjunction with the multiple game element images, so that the set of video images appears as an overlay over one or more of the multiple game element images.

39. The computer-readable medium of claim 38, wherein causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that creates an appearance of full motion video.

40. The computer-readable medium of claim 38, wherein causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises:

causing at least a portion of a video image within the set to be displayed within a first set of pixels within a game element area, such that a game element image associated with the game element area is at least partially visible.

41. The computer-readable medium of claim 38, wherein causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises:

causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that the set of video images appears as an opaque overlay over one or more of the multiple game element images.

42. The computer-readable medium of claim 38, wherein causing the set of video images to be displayed comprises:

causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that the set of video images appears as semi-transparent overlay over one or more of the multiple game element images.

43. The computer-readable medium of claim 38, executing the program instructions further result in:

determining whether a video image is associated with an alteration of a game element image within a game element area; and

if the video image is associated with the alteration, causing an altered image to be displayed in the game element area.

44. A casino game comprising:

a display; and

a computer-readable medium having program instructions stored thereon to perform a method, which when executed within the casino game, result in: the display displaying a supplemental graphical element over at least one symbol element in one or more displayed reels of the casino game, wherein the at least one symbol element remains at least partially visible while the supplemental graphical element is displayed.

45. The casino game of claim 44, wherein executing the program instructions further results in:

the display displaying the at least one symbol element;

determining, based on the at least one symbol element, whether a triggering event has occurred; and

if a triggering event has occurred, identifying the supplemental graphical element as a set of video images.

46. The casino game of claim 44, wherein displaying the supplemental graphical element comprises displaying the supplemental graphical element in a manner that creates an appearance of full motion video.

47. An apparatus comprising:

processing means for

causing multiple game element images to be displayed within multiple game element areas of a display device,

determining based on the multiple game element images, whether a triggering event has occurred,

if a triggering event has occurred, identifying a set of video images, and

causing the set of video images to be displayed on the display device in conjunction with the multiple game element images, so that the set of video images appears as an overlay over one or more of the multiple game element images.

48. The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the processing means causes the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that creates an appearance of full motion video.

49. The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the processing means causes the set of video images to be displayed by causing at least a portion of a video image within the set to be displayed within a first set of pixels within a game element area, such that a game element image associated with the game element area is at least partially visible.

50. The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the processing means causes the set of video images to be displayed by causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner

that the set of video images appears as an opaque overlay over one or more of the multiple game element images.

51. The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the processing means causes the set of video images to be displayed by causing the set of video images to be displayed in a manner that the set of video images appears as semi-transparent overlay over one or more of the multiple game element images.

52. The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the processing means further:
determines whether a video image is associated with an alteration of a game element image within a game element area; and
if the video image is associated with the alteration, causes an altered image to be displayed in the game element area.